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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [UNSC](#) [WI](#) [AG](#) [MO](#) [AF](#)
SUBJECT: DEMARCHE DELIVERED TO POLISARIO TO COME TO TALKS

REF: STATE 74895

Classified By: Amb. Zalmay Khalilzad. E.O 12958. Reasons 1.4 (B&D).

¶1. (C) Ambassador Sanders delivered reftel demarche June 6 to Polisario New York Rep Ahmed Boukhari, stressing the importance of maintaining the momentum established by UNSCR 1754 and underscoring the expectation that the parties will engage seriously and show flexibility as they work through their differences. She urged the Polisario to enter the dialogue with an open and positive attitude, adding that the international community was watching and that the Polisario should not risk the loss of credibility in the international community by failing to engage.

¶2. (C) Boukhari, who had just returned the previous evening from an extraordinary session of the Polisario leadership in Tindouf, said that the Polisario had made a June 3 decision to participate in the UN-sponsored talks and to do so seriously, a point he subsequently repeated three more times. He said the Polisario intended to send a high level delegation -- the same one that took part in the negotiations that led to the Houston Agreements concluded under the auspices of former SYG Personal Envoy James Baker. The delegation, the first members of which will be arriving in New York as early as June 11, will include:

- (1) Mahfud ALI BEIBA (Del Head), former PM and current President of Parliament, Political Leadership Member
- (2) Mohamed KHADAD, Political Leadership Member
- (3) Brahim GHALI, Political Leadership Member
- (4) Ahmed BOUKHARI (New York Rep), Political Leadership Member
- (5) Bachir SEGAYER, Adviser, Former New York Rep
- (6) Omar Abdellahi SIDI MOHAMED, Adviser, Current London Rep

¶3. (C) Boukhari said the Polisario hope was that Morocco will also enter the talks prepared to work seriously as well. But, Boukhari said, recent Moroccan behavior at the UN Regional Conference on Decolonization (Committee-24) in Grenada, where Morocco tried unsuccessfully to have three members of the CORCAS speak as representatives of Western Sahara, suggested the Moroccans are up to their old games again. In the same Grenada meeting a few weeks ago, Morocco also tried unsuccessfully to remove a reference to "the two parties" (Morocco and Polisario) in the final statement, Boukhari said. Morocco, he continued, was trying to create the impression that the Western Saharan problem is one between Sahrawi rather than between Morocco and the Polisario Front. He said this was a Moroccan tactic tried in 1993 with

then U.S. PermRep Albright and in 2000 with then Personal Envoy Baker, and it had not worked those times either.

¶4. (C) Boukhari said that the Polisario knows it will not be an easy task to arrive at a result that will satisfy both sides, but that trying to engage is a better option than doing nothing. Boukhari said he hoped that the talks might at least bring about a "cease-fire" in human rights violations in Western Sahara. Boukhari said the Polisario hoped it would be able to secure wide support from the international community. Of the "Friends," he said that the Polisario had still not determined the position of recently elected French President Nicolas Sarkozy, who, they hoped, would not be as one-sided as his predecessor. Boukhari said flatly that the Polisario does not trust the Spanish, who, they believe, are playing a double game, asserting that they are pro-Polisario while secretly being pro-French. As for the U.S., Boukhari said the Polisario was pleased with Ambassador Riley's May 9 affirmation that there are indeed two parties to the dispute (Morocco and the Polisario) and that the Moroccan autonomy plan is not the only plan on the table for the upcoming talks.

¶5. (C) Ambassador Sanders said that it was important to take one step at a time and that the first step was the most important. The U.S., she said, will be standing by, ready to assist the parties as they may wish.

KHALILZAD